



EXPORTING AND IMPORTING HORSES POST-BREXIT

Moving your horse in to or out of Great Britain, even if just to or from Northern Ireland, now requires significant paperwork that was not necessary pre-Brexit. If you are planning on moving your horse (whether temporarily or permanently) it is essential to **do your homework first**. There are links at the end of this article to government websites which will be useful.

Every equine, which includes horses, ponies, donkeys and mules, requires documentation in order to travel into and out of Great Britain. You will need some veterinary services from an approved 'official veterinarian' (OV), but most of the work is the responsibility of the owner or the commercial agent.

The good news is that currently the **UK government will cover some of the costs if travel is exclusively between GB and NI**.

There are different rules and regulations depending on whether or not the journey is for **economic purposes**, and whether or not the horse is registered with a **recognised breed society or competition authority**.

- **Non-economic activity** is that such as an unsponsored owner travelling to a competition, or a private sale. No **transporter authorisation** is required for this.
- **Economic activity** is that such as a sponsored owner travelling to a competition, or horses being hired out for filming. The operator of the vehicle will require **transporter authorisation** if the journey is over 65km. The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) issue the authorisation for travel within the UK. If the horse is travelling to the EU, the Border Control Post in the first country entered will also issue a **transporter authorisation**. **Certificates of Competence** and **Vehicle Approval** are also required.
- **Registered horses** are horses which are registered with a recognised breed society or an international competition authority (such as FEI). For these animals no **journey log** is required.
- **Unregistered horses** are all other horses, even if they hold a valid passport (which is a legal obligation for all horses in the UK anyway). If travelling a journey of over 8 hours between the UK and any other country, a **journey log** is required, which is issued by the APHA (for the UK leg) and the country which they first enter after leaving the UK (second leg). Unregistered horses also require a **supplementary travel ID** to enter the EU and may need an **Export Welfare Declaration**.

To import a horse in to Great Britain:

- From Northern Ireland, only a valid **passport** is required. If the horse is to return to NI, proof of the date of leaving is required.
- From the EU, a valid **passport, health certificate** and (sometimes) an **import licence** are required.
- From non-EU countries, requirements vary according to the country of origin, but will certainly include a **health certificate**.



To export a horse from Great Britain:

- To Northern Ireland, a valid **passport, Export Health Certificate (EHC), Customs Declaration Form and Common Health Entry Document (CHED)** are mandatory.
- To the EU, the same rules apply as to NI, but the horse also requires a **negative blood test** for Equine Infectious Anaemia.
- To non-EU countries, the requirements vary and management of this process is usually done by commercial organisations due to its complexity.
- Residency requirements also apply for export to most countries - check the specified periods for the country of interest. For example, a horse travelling from the UK to the EU must have been resident in the UK or EU for 40 days at the point of export.

Export Health Certificate (EHC)

An EHC is **issued by the UK government Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)** and is signed by an **Official Veterinarian (OV)**. An OV is a registered UK vet (MRCVS) who has undergone specific training and gained OV status in a specific species. Most equine OVs are first opinion equine vets in practice. The owner/transporter of the horse must initiate this process by completing the correct online form after registering on the Government Gateway, your vet cannot do this for you. On the form, the owner has to nominate a veterinary practice. This must be a practice which employs an OV and is geographically able to examine the horse – check that the practice has availability before selecting them on the form. DEFRA then issue an EHC which the vet will sign after inspecting the horse in the 48 hours prior to the horse leaving the premises. Horses must be fit to travel and free from communicable disease, especially ectoparasites (lice, ticks, ringworm etc). Note that all premises now require a **CPH registration number** (County/Parish/Holding) - check well in advance if your establishment (yard, farm, home, competition venue) already has one.

Usually the fee for the examination is payable directly to your vet practice, but currently the UK government is receiving the invoices for horses travelling to NI.

Common Health Entry Document (CHED)

A CHED is **issued by the EU**, and is required for all horses entering Northern Ireland or EU countries from GB. It is found on the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES), an online system for health certification and tracking consignments of animals or animal products coming into or out of the UK. It is the responsibility of the owner or transporter to obtain and complete this document, without which your horse will not be allowed to enter NI or the EU. No veterinary input is required. The system is relatively complicated and less user-friendly than the EHC application process, so it is advisable to initiate this well in advance of the intended date of travel, and seek help from the relevant Border Control Post if necessary (the point at which the horse will be entering the EU/NI).

All the above information is correct at time of writing, but we would advise you check current regulations every time you travel, as there could be further changes in future.



Useful links:

APHA guidance for exporting equines:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/export-horses-and-ponies-special-rules>

APHA guidance for importing equines:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/importing-or-moving-live-animals-animal-products-and-high-risk-food-and-feed-not-of-animal-origin>

Horse passport information:

<https://www.gov.uk/horse-passport>

List of OVAs (not exhaustive):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/find-a-professional-to-certify-export-health-certificates>

List of EU Border Control Posts:

https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/veterinary-border-control/designated-border-control-posts-bcps_en

International Air Transport Association:

<https://www.iata.org/en/publications/store/live-animals-regulations/>

The APHA Centre for International Trade, Carlisle:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896511/contacts-international-trade.pdf